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ABSTRACT

In September 1988, the Corporate Community Schools of America (C/CSA) opened its first model school in Chicago's North Lawndale, an innercity neighborhood scarred by deprivation, violence, and hopelessness. After briefly describing the school's laboratory approach, this report defines C/CSA's philosophy, goals, and educational plan and refers to research supporting the C/CSA model. The C/CSA is a not-for-profit coalition of business executives, community leaders, and concerned educators working together to reform U.S. urban public education. The C/CSA educational plan differs from the usual school-business arrangements by focusing on preschool, kindergarten, and elementary school instead of job training; facilitating corporate, educator, and community participation on boards; providing ongoing financial commitment; and participating with key groups in urban reform efforts. The plan's benefits include focusing resources effectively, taking full advantage of corporate expertise, and facilitating a systemwide impact in education. The North Lawndale school serves predominantly Afro-American and Hispanic students, operates year-round (except for 3 weeks in August), is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, and provides breakfast, lunch, snacks, and transportation as needed. The school's philosophy is that all students can be powerful lifelong learners. Founding principles, including the necessity for a strong principal, are described, along with the sound, performance-based management techniques used to ensure success. Implications and 1989-90 goals are also discussed. (MLH)

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AMERICA'S FIRST CORPORATE PUBLIC SCHOOL:
MODEL FOR EDUCATION REFORM?

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MODEL FOR EDUCATION REFORM?

I. Introduction

In September 1988, a bold and innovative program for the education of predominantly urban inner city children that had been conceptualized many years ago by its founder, reached fruition. Joe Kellman, President of Globe Glass Mirror Company and President of the Corporate Community Schools of America, had dreamed of a school in his old west-side neighborhood that would successfully educate the children of this community.

The Corporate Community Schools of America (C/CSA) opened its first model school on the westside of Chicago in the community of North Lawndale. This community is characterized as a slum, inner city neighborhood, scarred by deprivation, violence and hopelessness. It is also the kind of community envisioned for the philosophical idea and the educational plan of this school to bring about critical changes. The school is believed to be the first of its kind in the nation. It is an experimental project in urban education. It does, however, expect to be a model for corporate-sponsored school and urban public schools across the country. From the viewpoint of Mr. Kellman, the management skills of corporate America will take on a more personal level role in providing leadership for these model schools. They will be part of a "research and development laboratory approach" as used by cooperatives to improve products.

(C/CSA Progress Report, 1988).

The opening of the C/CSA school in Chicago came in the midst of the Chicago Public School reform efforts. The opportunity for being influential in this reform movement and the future of this school system provide a chance to achieve some goals of the C/CSA school earlier than anticipated. The vision held for this school is to improve the education of at-risk children in urban communities by being an interactive learning center where educational, business, community, and union leaders work together to promote change.

The focus of this paper will be to define the philosophy, goals and objectives and educational plan of the Corporate Community Schools of America and to make reference to research supportive of the methods being used in their efforts to transform urban public education. Furthermore, we ask the question: Can public school systems replicate the business management model in public education? Finally, we will look at the achievements over the last two years toward the ultimate goal and specifically the impact upon school reform in Chicago.

There has been very little written so far about this corporate school. Consequently, much of this paper relies on information received from the annual reports of the school, interviews with the principal and classroom observation.

II. Organization and Educational Plan of the Corporate Community Schools of America

The Corporate Community Schools of America is a not-for-profit coalition of business executives, community leaders and concerned educators working together to reform urban public education in the United States. It is a national organization of businesses and individuals dedicated to improving America's public schools.

The organization of the C/CSA consists of a national advisory board and local board of directors. The National Advisory Board has an initial selection of three members with full membership projected at twelve. Qualifications for membership are that one must be a nationally recognized civic and business leader with outstanding credentials. His/Her responsibilities are to advise and consent on matters of Local Board of Directors policy, to develop, to make decisions, and to assist in the national replication effort. The Local Board of Directors has eleven members consisting of five senior level corporate executives selected from among leadership level groups of sponsoring companies--three well-respected educators and three residents of the local school community, including the parent of a child enrolled at the school. Their responsibilities include, general oversight and to approve the budget for the local school, to promote partnerships with public schools, unions, and other key groups, to promote system-wide replication of C/CSA

innovations and to report regular results to investors and the general public. Members from this group also chair various committees of the organization,

After a nation-wide search, Dr. Elaine Mosley was hired as school principal. She has an outstanding background and qualifications. Dr. Mosley, together with the faculty, is charged with designing and implementing a teaching model aimed at meeting the individual developmental needs of each child.

A study of corporate education partnerships around the country revealed that while there is a great deal of corporate support for education, too often it has a limited impact upon student achievement. The educational plan for C/CSA calls for deeper, more sustained and more focused corporate involvement. Central to this mission is the establishment of working schools to develop and demonstrate successful educational methods, the first being the Chicago model school.

Based on information gathered from their study, the Corporate/Community Schools of America did an itemized description of the usual corporate involvement in education versus their educational plan. Some of the major key differences highlighted in their report are: focus on pre-school, kindergarten and elementary school versus focus on job training; corporate, educator and community involvement in defining mission through participation on boards versus limited collaboration with educators and community; ongoing financial commitment versus short term assistance; and participation with key reform groups

in urban reform efforts versus limited political involvement. The benefits to be derived from this educational plan would be three fold: focusing resources where they will have long term impact, taking full advantage of corporate expertise and working at facillitating a system-wide impact in education.

The corporate school boundaries include sections of four communities and the enrollment area cuts across four Chicago, public, elementary school districts. The children are predominantly Afro-American and Hispanic. The school operates year round except for a three week vacation in August. It is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Breakfast, lunch and snacks are provided and transportation is provided as needed.

III. Goals, Philosophy and Educational Principles of C/CSA

The Corporate Community Schools of America emphasizes their mission in such sub-titles as: "The Force for Critical Change" and "A Partnership for School Reform". Their stated goal is to effect critical change in educating inner city children by setting standards for higher quality urban public education and demonstrating successful instructional methods and sound school management principles that can be replicated in inner city public schools nation-wide. This Coalition plans to establish and to operate business-sponsored elementary schools. The schools will be located in inner city neighborhoods to serve a randomly selected student population that accurately reflects the racial

and socio-economic composition of the local public schools. They will measure student progress with standard achievement tests and other assessment techniques so that they can be compared to those of public school students. They also plan to operate at full enrollment, per pupil costs, comparable to local public school systems. Included in the planned activities of this school is to form a network of social service agencies to provide students and their families with assistance when needed.

The philosophy of this school is that all children can be powerful life-long learners. The social issues that children bring to school, if properly addressed need not impede their efforts to become powerful learners. The goal is to develop self-motivated children who are able to learn despite obstacles imposed by their living conditions. Success in urban education means reaching beyond the school walls into a larger community of parents, social agencies, and community leaders who will share a joint responsibility for the future of their community's children. The school in essence becomes the "HUB" (the center) of a network of support agencies that help students and their families.

To clarify and refine the goals of the C/CSA, they began by formulating certain educational principles as a philosophy for educating children. Their philosophy is based on what they have documented as ten proven principles for educational success. These principles are: 1) the belief that all children can be powerful, life-long learners; 2) a strong principal; 3) a highly

professional faculty; 4) safe, clean and adequately equipped physical facilities; 5) an early childhood education; 6) a non-graded curriculum; 7) culturally appropriate instructional experiences; 8) year round schooling; 9) strong parental and family involvement and 10) a support system of resources.

The Corporate/Community Schools of America has developed its management style from that of corporate America. The success of an educational plan relies on the application of sound business management techniques. These management techniques in a capsule format are stated as: 1) meeting market needs--fulfilling the educational and support service requirements of students, parents and families; 2) strict accountability for performance--holding principal, faculty and staff directly responsible for the educational success of each child; 3) participatory decision making--the principal, faculty, parents, students, and community sharing in the educational success of the students; 4) authority and autonomy at the operating level--providing freedom for faculty and staff to develop appropriate educational experiences for individual student needs; 5) employment based on demonstrated competence--ensuring an instructional staff capable of meeting the educational needs of inner-city children; 6) compensation tied to verifiable performance--objective standards for measuring accomplishments and rewarding effective and efficient--achievement of objectives; 7) compensation adequate to attract and assure professionalism--maintaining a community of high quality, dedicated people, providing educational excellence for

urban youth.

In the year 1988-1989, the school provided service to 150 pre-primary and primary level children, ages two to eight. The goals for that year were to demonstrate early educational success. They implemented a faculty designed professional development program. They planned opportunities for parents to involve themselves in the school's learning environment. They were planning programs to connect families with social service agencies and they continued to forge strong ties to universities to conduct research and to develop cooperative programs.

IV. Summary of Relevant Research Findings

The three major objectives of the C/CSA educational plan may be summarized as : early intervention programs, parental involvement in their children's learning, and making the school the center of a network of support agencies that will help students and their families where needed.

Research findings indicate that environmental factors in the lives of minority children are the most significant elements for their lack of success in school. Intellectual stimulation that is so vital to academic preparation is not found in the homes of children from families where parents themselves lack the educational background to provide such stimulus. Pre-school education programs can and do fill this gap. Studies have shown that early intervention made a difference in school performance.

Irving Lazar of Cornell University, Director of Longitudinal Studies, Commissioned by the Education Commission of the States, found in his studies children that had been enrolled in Head Start programs were more successful than their controls. These children were less likely to be enrolled in remedial classes or to be retained in grades than were controls. They also were more likely to graduate from high school and to enroll in post-secondary education programs. Where cost could be ascertained, the savings in special and remedial education were greater than the cost of early childhood programs. Other findings of the study showed differences in labor force participation and the rate at which these former students were on welfare or had police records in their communities.

The National Association of State Boards of Education Task Force on Early Childhood Education in its report, "Right From the Start," recommends that early childhood units be established in elementary schools and also that public schools develop partnerships with other early childhood programs and community agencies to build and to improve services for young children.

The High/Scope Pre-School Curriculum study traces the effects on young people through age fifteen of three pre-school curriculum models. They found that the IQ of the children who had attended these programs rose 27 points during the first year. The study which replicated an earlier study, demonstrated again that good pre-school programs for poor children can lead to improvements in their intellectual and scholastic performance.

Parental involvement in their children's learning is a major influence in helping the schools achieve their goals. Research findings show that both gifted and disadvantaged children can greatly improve their achievement in school from the efforts of the home. However, research also shows that the average parent spends less than half an hour a day doing things with their children.

As part of a larger study of discipline in selected inner city schools, Chicago elementary schools serving predominantly poor black students, was the setting for a survey on issues of home-school cooperation. The findings support what is seen as a major problem in schools serving lower income, minority populations. The lack of effective parent-school communication and cooperation is believed to be a major cause of both discipline and below average academic performance. Traditional methods of involving parents (P.T.A., written communication, etc.) is not sufficient to attack these problems. Schools must seek opportunities to involve parents in other ways that will result in parent participation in the activities of the school environment and also its governing procedures. This study concludes that there must be a strategic plan that addresses particular levels of activity along a continuum of parental involvement (Menacker, 1988).

Other studies have suggested that the home and school are interdependent for educational improvement in schools serving the urban poor (Menacker, 1988). Student achievement is higher when

there is more parental involvement (Henderson, 1987). A comprehensive review of school effectiveness research (Purkey and Smith, 1983) list parental involvement and support as one of the variables in the organizational and structural category. It is the consensus of a majority of the most recent studies that effective schools must have parental involvement.

The C/CSA has a program designed to engage parents in their children's schooling. The school has an aggressive outreach program to encourage parents to participate. The hours are convenient for working parents. Parents can ride the bus to school with their children, have lunch with them, and participate in their daily activities. Pre-school parents must visit the school twice each day when they bring the children to school and when they pick them up. The method of reporting student progress requires all parents to confer with their children's teacher at least four times a year. The school also has a Parent Activity Center which helps them in their own educational development. Currently, they offer G.E.D. classes, adult literacy classes and word processing. This process of providing opportunities for parents to further their own educational growth helps achieve the goals of the school to actively engage parents in the education of their children.

The third major objective of making the school the center of a network of support agencies for students and their families is still a controversial issue for most public schools. The difficulty lies in part in the belief that schools should devote

their resources to academic pursuits. If they maintain high quality instructional programs, can they also be involved in so called "social programs?" Since schools reflect the society in which they operate, it becomes inevitable that they will have to deal with the problems of that society. The question is how can schools organize their resources to be an effective agent for the social service needed by the students and their families? This question is still being debated and there is little conclusive research in this area. It is clear there is a need for the development of a model to deal with the role of the school in this domain.

The "Hub of Services" concept of C/CSA is a central component of the school design. In a recent publication describing the functions of this component, it is compared and contrasted to existing school health models. Briefly described, the homework for the "HUB" is based on the tradition of school health practice which identified three program components: service, education, and environmental health and safety. The goals for each of these components have been established. The first step in the implementation of the HUB OF SERVICES was to hire a public health nurse as the coordinator. Authority and autonomy at the operating level has given the coordinator freedom to design a relevant program. The program has been directed toward the identification of needs of the students and their families and the development of a management system to ensure that the model works effectively and efficiently. One example of

the integration of the management strategies to the coordination of the HUB services is the CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS program. The organization of this program followed a review of the total enrollment to identify aggregates with common needs. Children with respiratory problems accounted for 5% of the enrollment. In order to coordinate services for these children it was necessary to utilize all of the domains; services, education, and environment. To illustrate how this works, team members are identified in terms of their support to the total program. Resource management included utilizing classroom teachers in the service domain to observe breathing difficulties. The educational domain is addressed through student and faculty counseling. All support staff are coached in maintenance of an environment that minimizes breathing difficulties. Evaluation and refinement of this program is managed through a data management system. A continuous marketing is done to try and reach all children with respiratory problems.

Issues involved in the replication of this model is three fold: 1) having a full time coordinator; 2) having a philosophy of being committed to the whole child at the policy level to provide for the program design; and, 3) having an administration skilled in management to implement sound management techniques in the school enterprise.

This report further describes how it is possible to replicate this model in Chicago Public Schools. Operational costs have been nominal by using participating agencies to

provide routine services for which they have existing human and financial resources. Because this model builds on the established institutional and other strengths of the community, it is a cost-effective way for schools to ensure health and social services for students and their families.

V. Status of C/CSA and Implications for Educational Reform

The Corporate/Community Schools of America is an educational reform model for inner city schools. Because it is a corporate-sponsored and funded school, it is different from public school education reform. Now in the third year of operation, its educational plan is still unfolding. It has instituted partnerships with public school administrators and teachers to share information. It has continued active interaction with Chicago school reform. Contracts have been made with the Universities of Chicago, Illinois, Loyola and others for their participation in developing research and teacher training to enhance the education of inner city children. C/CSA is on target with its projected enrollment of three-hundred students in three years.

C/CSA goals for the school year 1989-1990 includes working with reform groups, inner city community organizations, cooperations and educational leaders in Chicago to position this school as a management and instructional model for fundamental change in the Chicago Public Schools. Members of C/CSA want to

expand networking with public schools by involving public school educators in the development of the school curriculum, instructional practices, and pupil assessment. C/CSA's continued development projects are to raise local and national visibility of its program through presentations of its principles for successful educational reform. It is visited each year by many educators and others interested in learning about the methods being used here. It is experimenting and documenting results of what it believes is evidence of a plan that can be replicated in any school system.

The Chicago Public Schools Reform Act did incorporate some of the recommendations of C/CSA. CPSRA has given more authority to the principal, and a local school council has been elected with the responsibility of writing an annual school improvement plan. There is also more spending freedom for schools. Chicago Public Schools will get some funds not restricted by state and federal regulations. Within the Chicago Area the C/CSA educational principles are being recommended by some who have positions of leadership in education. They are proposing early childhood education, day care services and more cooperation between schools and the social welfare agencies in their communities.

VI. Discussion and Conclusion

The C/CSA Model School of Chicago is experimental. The

administration believes it is accomplishing its mission. It is successfully educating students in an inner city, urban environment. It is being funded to continue its model school. It is providing a setting for practicing what educational research has found to be effective in schools.

With the freedom now given to principals in the public schools, there is an excellent opportunity to incorporate these educational principles and practices into the schools.

This one model school will not have a significant impact on educational reform immediately in Chicago or in the nation. Implications are, however, that businesses will no longer be willing to support public education that turns out a product unprepared to function in the work-place. They also will have proven that schools can educate children, and businesses will demand schools to do so.